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THE PAN AMERICAN OUTLOOK

By John Barrett, Director General of the Pan American Union, and formerly United States Minister to Argentina, Panama and Colombia

These are days of great import in Pan American relations. The world war is having a most direct bearing upon Pan American solidarity. It is doing more than any other influence since the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine to weld together the American Republics in common purpose, in common interest and common achievement. The Pan American development of the hour is a disappointment to every enemy of those ideals for which the advocates of true Pan Americanism have stood in the past and will stand for long years in the future. What is happening now confirms the wisdom of the persistent endeavors which the friends of Pan Americanism have made during a long period of trial and tribulation.

It is interesting to look back ten or fifteen years and remember the pessimism of those who opposed the movement for practical Pan Americanism which was initiated by the Pan American Conference held at Rio Janeiro in 1906. It is easy now to remember how the pioneer advocates of this movement were scoffed at, how their articles, addresses and efforts were ridiculed. Where there were a few men who honestly believed that the results were possible which now are before us, there were thousands who regarded such possibilities as pure dreams.

The records of the Pan American Union, the international organization of all the American Republics, with which the writer has had the honor to be connected for nearly twelve years, prove conclusively the growth of Pan American sentiment during the last ten or twelve years. A decade ago it was difficult to find any group of men in the political or business life of the United States who took a

real interest in practical Pan Americanism. The efforts of the Latin American diplomatic and consular representatives in the United States, of the United States diplomatic and consular representatives in Latin America, and the unceasing labor of the staff of the Pan American Union seemed to make little impression. There might have been discouragement were it not for the absolute confidence of these diplomats and the officers of this organization in the justice of their cause and what the future would bring forth. Fortunately the Department of State, headed by a great Secretary of State, Elihu Root, coöperated with the Pan American diplomats and the Pan American Union, and presently the Department of Commerce, which heretofore had thought little of Pan American Trade followed its example; then gradually the magazines and newspapers, chambers of commerce, boards of trade, universities and colleges, began to awaken to the potentialities of Pan Americanism. In due time the cause developed a real stride of progress. As each year passed by the interest grew more and more widespread until at the outbreak of the world war Pan Americanism was an accepted principle and fact throughout the world.

When, however, in April, 1917, the United States entered the struggle, many of the old pessimists and an army of skeptical persons again expressed their views to the effect that the structure of Pan Americanism which had been built up so rapidly during the previous decade would now prove itself to be only a paper castle. It is actually sad to call attention to the fact that the writer received numerous letters and listened to many statements to the effect that all which he and others had done in favor of Pan Americanism in past years would not now stand the test of a great trial. There were too many men who said:

What now of your vaunted Pan Americanism; what now of all the speeches, addresses, articles, predictions, etc., of the past; what now of the value of Pan American coöperation, Pan American unity and Pan American commerce; what now of the real Pan Americanism that is supposed to have its deep foundations based on the Monroe Doctrine and the early struggle of all the American Republics for liberty and independence; will not, in face of all your efforts, it be proved that the ties that bind the

American Republics together are of wax and will melt away under the fire of this world struggle?

The day after the United States declared war on Germany I was asked in almost a patronizing way by a prominent editor; "what will the other American Republics do now that one of their sister nations has entered the field of war; will any of them break relations; will any of them by chance declare war?" He asked as if he had no confidence in such developments. Without the slightest hesitation but with the confidence born of a little knowledge of the history and the record of the other American Republics and of the characteristics of the Latin American press and peoples, the reply was made that I believed that within fourteen months from that time, that is, by July 1, 1918, over one-half of the Latin American governments would have broken relations with the enemies of the United States and that over one-third of them would have entered the war. It was also stated that, although a small group of governments might remain neutral, there was little question but that their attitude of neutrality would be a sincere one, not intended as lack of respect for or sympathy with the United States, but inspired by a conscientious belief of the statesmen of such countries that they were doing what was best in international relationship.

Without expressing any opinion whatever as to the wisdom of the action of the various American Republics, and without commenting upon whether such action is praiseworthy or not, it is permitted to make a summarized statement of just how these governments stand according to official records. These figures and facts will confound the enemies of Pan American solidarity and demonstrate that the attitude of the Western Hemisphere taken as a whole is undoubtedly favorable to the triumph of the just principles of democracy.

Of the twenty Latin American Republics which reach from Mexico and Cuba on the north to Argentina and Chile on the south, thirteen have officially broken relations with the Central Allies. Given alphabetically they are: Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador,

Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. Of the thirteen which have broken relations, nine have declared war. These include Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Two other countries, namely, Uruguay and Peru, have taken steps equivalent to a declaration of war, but as their attitude has not been thus officially treated by Germany, they still are to be classed technically as only having broken relations. Were they considered as having declared war, eleven of the Latin American countries could be described as actually being in the midst of the conflict.

Seven countries remain officially neutral: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Salvador and Venezuela. Some regard the action of Paraguay as classing her among those which have broken relations, but this is not accurate according to strict official interpretation.

Summed up it therefore can be said that technically speaking a good majority of the Latin American countries have broken relations with the Central Allies; morally speaking a majority have declared war, while barely one-third remain neutral. There should be fairness, moreover in judging the neutral countries. It is, in the opinion of high authorities, unjust to say that any of them are favorable to the enemies of the United States or are against this country and the Allies. It is the opinion of many of those familiar with the situation that the administrative officers of all the neutral countries, in determining the policies of their governments, are doing what they honestly believe to be right. They contend that there has been no actual official cause for their governments declaring war, and therefore their present attitude is justified. None of them, however, denies the right of each country to act as it sees best in the premises. It must be borne in mind also that the neutral countries of Latin America are placing their vast material resources at the disposal of the United States and the Allies, and are aiding in this way almost as much as if they were actually in the conflict.

Careful scrutiny of the leading newspapers in the neutral countries shows that a large majority of them are friendly to the United States and the European Allies. Only a small minority can be classed as anti-American and anti-Allies. Consideration of the editorial comment in the representative papers in all parts of Latin America, the special articles which are appearing in its press, the expressions of opinion which are being made in the various congresses, special addresses that are being delivered, and pamphlets and books that are being distributed, would lead to the inevitable conclusion that the war has justified beyond all expectations the best principle of Pan Americanism and proved the actual solidarity of the western hemisphere.

It now behooves every American, whether he comes from the northern or southern continent, to be studying more than ever before how the American Republics can work together in harmony, in sympathy, in mutual respect and in the preservation of the world peace which must follow this mighty struggle. It is a remarkable fact that since the Pan American Union, whose constituency includes all the American Republics, was reorganized in 1906-1907 there has been no war between any two American Republics, and the sentiment has grown stronger each year that no two shall engage in a conflict against the sentiment and will of the other nineteen. Around the governing board table of the Pan American Union there assembles on the first Wednesday of each month, except those of the summer, the high diplomatic representatives of all the American Republics. There they sit, shoulder to shoulder, elbow to elbow, each having equal authority with the other and all actuated by a common purpose which means the coöperation of all the American nations for the development of friendship, good understanding, better acquaintance, commerce and peace among them. While this board has not actual authority to settle Pan American political problems, such as the prevention of wars, its moral influence is undoubtedly a mighty factor in this direction. A great European statesman recently entering the Pan American Building at Washington, noting the practical work which the Pan American

Union is doing for Pan American solidarity, and then finally seeing its governing board room, its great council table and the chairs arranged about it carrying each of them the name and coat of arms of a particular country, and finally looking at a photograph which showed the Secretary of State of the United States and the diplomatic representatives of the other American Republics seated there, remarked that he believed that if there had existed in London or Berlin, in Paris or Vienna a Pan European Union organized on the basis of the Pan American Union in Washington, and having a similar council chamber and council, this world war would never have taken place. Possibly this is an optimistic view point, but it carries a suggestion of immeasurable significance. May it not be true that the American Republics, through their Pan American Union and through the example of their council which forms its governing board, are showing the way to the world for international coöperation and a league of nations which shall preserve forever that peace which all men and all nations now hope will be inaugurated at the conclusion of this war.